



PATRICK OGAWA
ACTING EXECUTIVE OFFICER

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

December 16, 2014

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The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012


PATRICK OGAWA
ACTING EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Supervisors:

RECOMMENDATION REGARDING ALLOCATION OF REWARD FUNDS RELATING TO THE ARSON FIRE AT ST. JOHN VIANNEY CATHOLIC CHURCH (ALL DISTRICTS) (3-VOTES)

SUBJECT

Board approval is being requested for the distribution of reward funds in the amount of \$10,000 to be paid from the Board's discretionary funds.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

Approve the recommendation of the Reward Committee to distribute reward funds in the total amount of \$10,000, to be paid from the Board's discretionary funds, to the individuals who provided information to law enforcement that led to the apprehension and conviction of the person responsible for the arson fire at St. John Vianney Catholic Church.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

On April 16, 2011, at approximately 12:04 a.m., the Sheriff's Arson/Explosives Detail investigators responded to St. John Vianney Catholic Church, located at 1345 Turnbull Canyon Road in Hacienda Heights to investigate an extensive structure fire, which was later determined to be arson. On April 19, 2011, the Board approved a reward for \$10,000 and on October 8, 2013, the Board reinstated the \$10,000 reward.

During the investigation, witnesses came forward and were instrumental in the apprehension and conviction of Gregory Shiga (Defendant). The lead investigator on the case from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and the Deputy District Attorney indicated that the witnesses provided pivotal information and evidence that was instrumental in solving the case and led to the successful identification and arrest of the Defendant, and the witnesses also testified at the trial. As a result, Gregory Shiga was arrested on May 14, 2012 by the Arson/Explosive Detail and on July 9, 2013, following a three week jury trial, the Defendant was convicted on four counts of aggravated arson, pursuant to Penal Code 451 and one count of burglary. The judge sentenced him to 18 years to life in State prison and ordered him to pay \$8,926,837.78 in restitution to the Church.

Four claims for the reward were filed with the Board of Supervisors, Executive Office. A panel with representatives from the Sheriff, Chief Executive Office, County Counsel and the Executive Office of the Board, reviewed the claims and recommends that the \$10,000 reward be awarded to the four claimants who provided information to law enforcement. As recommended by law enforcement and the Deputy District Attorney, the distribution of funds will include \$8,500 to the first witness and the remaining \$1,500 to be split equally among the other three witnesses. In accordance with the provisions of the Los Angeles County Code, the Board must now consider the claims and make a final determination for distribution of the reward funds.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

Approval of the above recommendation supports the County Strategic Goal No. 2 – Community Support and Responsiveness. Publication in local newspapers and posting of reward notices on the County website may encourage persons to provide information to law enforcement, which could lead to the apprehension and/or conviction of individuals who commit crimes, thereby improving the quality of life for residents of Los Angeles County by removing such individuals from the community.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The Board of Supervisors established a \$10,000 reward fund. Pursuant to provisions in the County Code, the reward is to be paid from the Board of Supervisors' discretionary funds in equal shares of \$2,000 from each Supervisor's budget.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

In 1993, the Board of Supervisors adopted an amendment to the County Code establishing procedures for offering case rewards for information leading to the apprehension and/or conviction of persons guilty of criminal acts. Your Board, from time to time, has offered such rewards to encourage citizens to come forward and assist law enforcement with their investigations.

The action recommended is in compliance with the County Code, Title 4 – Revenue and Finance relating to rewards; and specifically Section 4.50.010B, which states "conviction of the person or persons responsible for the crime shall be required for payment of a reward unless the Board of Supervisors makes a finding of impossibility of Conviction due to the death or incapacity of such person or persons."

The Notice of Reward offered was published in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune. In addition, the reward notice was posted on the Board of Supervisors' website; and the Sheriff's Department was provided a copy of the notice. The filing period to submit a claim to the Executive Office of the Board for the reward expired on March 14, 2014.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Approval of this recommendation does not impact other current County services or projects.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Ogawa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Patrick" and last name "Ogawa" clearly distinguishable.

PATRICK OGAWA
Acting Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

PO:LL:mdc

c: c: District Attorney
Sheriff
Interim Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller